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India-Pakistan: Current Relations and Security Concerns

Relations between India and Pakistan have improved somewhat over the past year, in our view. The two countries are attempting to settle a variety of nonpolitical issues through their recently established Joint Commission. Progress on political talks, however, has stalled over substantive disagreements on the nature of their relationship

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Both India and Pakistan view the other as its primary enemy and their improved relationship remains tenuous and could easily be disrupted.

-- Pakistan believes India has never accepted its independent existence and it wants to make it a weak buffer state under Indian hegemony. Islamabad is particularly

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concerned that India and the Soviets will cooperate to impose their demands on Pakistan.

- India views Pakistan's strong ties with China with alarm and charges that Pakistan is using the Afghanistan crisis to strengthen itself against India. It opposes US weapons assistance to Pakistan and wants to maintain the Indian Ocean area free of superpower rivalry.

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Both countries have the bulk of their armed forces deployed along their common border. India's forces opposite Pakistan are larger and better equipped than those of Pakistan. Even with Pakistan's current arms modernization, we estimate that India's military superiority over Pakistan will continue to grow through the 1980s.

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Pakistan has little strategic depth opposite India. Most of its principal cities and major lines of communications are within 100 kilometers of the Indian border. A major breakthrough by Indian forces would immediately threaten Pakistan's most important political, cultural, and economic assets. Consequently, Pakistan's military strategy emphasizes a forward defense against India.

- Pakistan's armed forces have serious command-and-control, training, and logistic deficiencies, according to our analysis, which limit their effectiveness, even with the acquisition of new weapons.
- Pakistan has more strategic depth in the west and has adopted a strategy of defense-in-depth opposite Afghanistan. The deployment of only four divisions in the west supports this strategy; Pakistan would have time to move reinforcements from east to west before Afghan or Soviet forces could threaten vital Pakistani assets.

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